South Dakota

The only constant in Bob's life was the open doors of a Veteran's Hospital. Wherever he was, he could at least depend on them.

Uncle Sam would repair his leg, reinforce his colon, monitor his lungs and keep the morphine and trazadone available. He would eventually be classified 100% permanently disabled.

Bob never divulged the whole story of Korea to anyone, not the slaughter, discrimination or the torture. He still raged and wept. Panic lurking just beyond the veil of sleep. The VA understood and tried to help…. but not even God could mend those wounds.

"You're the only one I ever talked to about war. I've never talked to nobody, not even my psychiatrist or psychologist. Cause the person (war) happens to, it's hard to get rid of. I even went and asked a priest in the Catholic Church about why I felt the way I did…. 'Oh, you're forgiven! You're still gonna go to heaven!' I says, "You mean (the bible) tells me, THOU SHALL NOT KILL, and I kill, and I'm forgiven?! Bye!' I don't need that, and I told him bye. I never, never went back to a Catholic Church…. cept, I used to take Nellie and the kids, but I'd never go into the church. I'd walk um to the door, (then) I'd go sit in the truck until they came out."

"Well, at that time it was a car. It was a 47 Ford coup that had the rear end stuck up sky high. Looked like one of them damn fart bugs!"

While Bob was hospitalized in 1980/81, he was an outspoken advocate for the men in the Veterans Domiciliary. Ever the training instructor, Bob rallied the men and frustrated the staff whenever he was admitted. He could charm or infuriate - depending on your demeanor.

The VA's Rehabilitation Outreach Program provided essential direction for Bob's life. After several interviews the staff was able to ferret out what made Bob happy…. rocks, bones and ancient man.

So, the VA sponsored a training program of classwork, study courses and local outreach work agreements. There Bob was able to hone his skills in geology, archeology and paleontology. This was the open door to the happiest years he would remember.

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Bob, at the age of 50, had just finished his VA hospital stay in Hot Springs, SD.

"That's when I found out the bombshell – (that) I had a real birth certificate!"

The VA sought the birth certificate from Colorado. When Bob got a look at it, he was surprised to <u>not</u> see Gertrude's name as his mother. Who was 'Mary'? There was his dad's name; Francisco Vallejos - plus, the box "legitimate birth" was checked!

Angry and frustrated at this revelation, Bob confronted his father in Trinidad. He was met with a smug sneer and half looped laugh. Further insult came when Frank bragged, he purposely did not tell Bob; back in 1965; that his tio Diego was dying and was asking for him.

Bob came to learn his father's younger brother was still alive. One day Luis paid his nephew and brother a visit. Frank was furious to see his short-legged brother appear at his house. Frank railed at Luis to get off his property…and never come back. Luis left but was agile enough to slip a business card to Robert, before heading back home to Albuquerque, NM.

Rage was all consuming, and Bob could feel his chest tighten. With no explanations from his father, Bob sought out the few remaining Martinez family members for answers. They still feared Frank's wrath should they divulge this skeleton.

But Frank was frail now, and the Martinez clan (through Luis) rallied to point 'Coyote' towards his native heritage.

"Luis was my father's brother…my uncle. I was (later) told by Luis that he thought my mother was Native American…Hopi."

"My dad had met her on 2nd Mesa…when he was a contractor…building retaining walls (for the) WPA. (Works Progress Administration)"

Further information was acquired by distant cousins on 2nd Mesa. All firsthand knowledge was gone by then – except Frank and an old Hopi shaman named Titus. Bob was told,

"How my mother; when she was pregnant with me; was cast out of the Hopi nation. Because she had done something that was basically considered a criminal act…getting pregnant…before marriage. So, she was cast out and wound up in Santa Clara pueblo, which is between Taos and Santa Fe, NM."

There is a cultural taboo against speaking of the dead. Still Bob pressed to learn the identity of "Mary" on his birth certificate. Bob's maternal cousins pointed to their revered shaman and eagle keeper – Titus. He lived alone in a canyon beyond 3rd Mesa. He kept young golden eagles on his roof – for ceremonial purposes.

"Through Titus is how I got the ocla (amulet) made out of seashell (abalone), her photograph and a small ceremonial bowl she made as a child…. used for making medicines."

The photograph was of the famed pueblo potter Mary Histia, as a young woman, perhaps pregnant, holding an exquisite and ornate pot (olla). Bob assumed this was the 'Mary" from his birth certificate.

(Personal Input)

Research I did online, however, told me the photographer A.C. Vroman took that photo in 1900; thirty full years before Bob was born. Further digging uncovered a *daughter* of Mary Histia (a student at college) in New Mexico had died…. about 2 months after little Bobby was born.

This is only an assumption – but it was as close to a 'smoking gun' as I would get.

(End Input)

Further whispers from the Martinez clan told Bob that it was his tio Diego that brought him, as a baby, to the childless couple Frank and Gertrude Vallejos. Bob's DNA confirmed Frank to be his father but did not confirm who his real mother was.

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I had asked Bob, "When I get around to writing your life story, what are some of the more important parts you'd like me to focus on? You're looking at me and you're smiling…. why?"

"You have become the most important, wonderful thing that's happened in my life!"

After a blush and giggle, I asked Bob to focus on what I could *write* about.

"Oh, well, then…the most important thing; other than you; that happened to me was that I finally got to use what I trained myself to be in school; academically, and that was in geology, paleontology and archeology. That was the happiest times of my life. Even though my kids tried to ruin that; which they did…OK. But that was the most important thing that's happened to me."

Bob had taken courses from the University of Florida, University of Colorado, Colorado School of Mines and Technology, Trinidad State College, and Alamosa State… he also spent 3 semesters enrolled in classes in Pennsylvania.

Bob also learned about the strife and government abuse of the Native Americans. The second 'Wounded Knee' uprising at Pine Ridge that began in 1973 was still a flashpoint in the politics of the 1980's.

Under the VA's sponsorship, Bob began to work off and on, from 1983 – 1986, with the National Grasslands at Buffalo Gap, South Dakota.

"I was workin at the supervisor's office at Custer, S.D. I was able to rent a cabin from one of the secretary's there….I'd been there (about) a month, month and a half, when all of a sudden there was this HUGH male buffalo, that had a gray beard. He was old, (but) he found a way to get across the cattle guard (at the end of my driveway.) On my days off I'd sit out front, listen to the birds and watch the wildlife. And that buffalo used to come and stand at the fence and 'moooo' at me. So, I'd 'mooo' back.

This went on for another month. Then one day; I was still in bed; (around) 6 or 7am, (when) all this mooooing woke me up. I looked out the window and here's that buffalo! So, I got dressed and went outside. Right then I (watched) that buffalo come across the damn cattle guard! (He came up to the porch) and put his head (up against) my right leg and went 'MOOOOO"! From that day forward, that buffalo used to come and he would stay there, until I got off work and I came home."

The park rangers knew about the old bull. But lately they were unable to locate him and feared foul play. Bob didn't volunteer at the location where the buffalo decided to hang out.

"Cause when I'd go to work, he'd go behind the (cabin). There was a lot of good grass and everything back there, and you couldn't see him from the roadway."

Bob started feeding the old bull oats, and provided a calm, quiet summer retreat to get away from the ever-gawking public. Bob was able to give the old boy ear scratches; head rubs and an occasional hug.

"(After several weeks) I decided I'd better let um know, cause if something happens to that buffalo…. they're gonna blame me."

"One day I just had to tell (that I had) an orphan over (at my cabin) I've been takin care of for about 5 months. (The boss says) What kind is it?' I says, 'ah tatanka.' 'What the hell is that?' I says,' you got native American; Lakota's workin for you and you don't know what the hell that means? It means buffalo!' 'YOU WHAT?! That's illegal!' 'No, it's not,' I says, 'you let him out of the gate.'

Bob invited his boss over to his cabin to prove his claim. Bob whistled a couple of notes and the big ol bull comes; lumbering in slow motion; around the side of the cabin.

"'That son-of-a-bitch! That's where he's been hiding! You been hiding him?' 'No,' I says, 'he's been hiding from you cause he don't like you!' "

The supervisor's office wasn't going to argue with a 2,000 lb. wild buffalo, so they let him stay with Bob. Late the following summer Bob found the old bull dead right by his chair on the porch. The Custer District office had never seen, or heard, of anyone having the 'power' to have a buffalo do his bidding

"I'm that way with animals, with wildlife; ever since I was a little kid."

No doubt word of 'Bob's Buffalo' rippled through the local native clans. Someone special had come - special indeed……..... He was also an arrow maker.

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In short order Bob was recognized as an asset to the Forest Service. He was transferred between the district offices of Custer, Pactola and Elk Mountain, between the years 1986 and 1993.

Bob brushed off his earlier teachings from tio Diego and began to give demonstrations (demos) of authentic arrow making. Bob attended Archeology Days, in Mitchell, S.D. where he flint knapped with the other archeologists (arcees). Big words and elaborate demos were given by other flint knappers (using totally inappropriate tools). Bob was embarrassed by them. When Bob demonstrated arrow making the authentic way; repeating the simple lessons learned at his uncle's side; the public clamored for more!

"We had demos from all kinds of flint knappers – and what happened there is (that) everybody had his own method of making prehistoric stuff. I took grand prize because I didn't cheat. I did it the way you're supposed to do it. (There) was a PhD there (in anthropology) and (boy) did he get pissed!"

Bob combined his lessons growing up, with the 'book read' archeologist. He told two stories, one about bows and arrows, and the other about the atlatl.

"Now (when) using an arrow, it's never used on small game. It's like taking a 30.6 and shooting a quail. All you're gonna have is feathers and wings. If using an arrow (say) to shoot a deer, you (have to) get as close as you possibly can. In order to get very close, you're gonna have to know how to use the scent pads deer have on their knees. You rub it all over you and you smell just like a deer; and here comes the buck!"

Once an arrow takes an animal's life; the condition of that arrow (broken or whole) can tell an archeologist what happened.

"If you don't hit a bone, (the archer) will pull the shaft out and leave it lay (then bury the arrowhead). It's a one-time shot, one time use for that particular arrowhead. It's done its job - Massawu has made it that way. The animal has died, so <u>you</u> can survive. A long prayer is said before you touch that animal."

"If you know your archeology …… the point you found (or the broken one you found) will tell you what happened. How did it break, why did it break. It's answering your questions. OK, now if it breaks in half, we'll say; which is most of them; so much of the tip is gone. OK. Two things (may) have happened: either it hit bone and the broken piece is in the animal…. or it breaks clean (a snap fracture), where it hit a rock. You'll find some part of the tip (nearby)."

The other common weapon was the atlatl. A prehistoric Uto-Aztecan, folded dart/spear' device, which provided amplified throwing power through hinge action.

"When dealing with the atlatl, you're dealing with a bigger point. Cause many of these points people say 'I've got an arrowhead', (but) it's (really) a dart point. It's much bigger, because your arrow points that you use on an arrow (shaft) are usually very small. You'll find them even smaller than my pinky fingernail. All they need is something that will penetrate the skin, is all that's necessary. The main intent is to let that animal bleed itself to death. You just slowly follow the footprints. Blood or no blood."

"But with the atlatl, they're made……to make him bleed out real quick!"

The atlatl holds the spear with a detachable dart end. The atlatl has a hook or fitted groove that the spear rests in. The thrower then propels the shaft, faster and farther, when he snaps the atlatl toward the prey. A leather thong keeps the atlatl with the thrower.

"I can throw one a little over 100 yards. That's a long way. And when that hits the animal, the main shaft detaches itself, (but) it's attached to another leather thong that goes to the dart shaft. The reason for that is, the dart shaft is in the animal, not all the way but it's in the animal. An he starts runnin and the long shaft keeps hittin on the bushes and trees and all kinds of hell (which) tears him up more inside. He's gonna die pretty quick. Very smart people."

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While Bob is educating the public, he's also educating his co-workers.

"A piece of paper doesn't prove shit to me, because every damn one of you guys, I've had to retrain, even Dan!"

Subtle Bob is not….

"One day (Dan) did a general survey and he brought me this big ass rock; beautiful coloring in it. And he says, 'Here!' he put it on my desk, 'Now go make arrowheads till you're content!' 'Why the hell you bring that piece of shit in. That won't make no arrowheads.' 'It's jasper, man! What the hell's matter with you?' I says, 'Nothin, it's you what the hells the matter.' (Dan is flustered now) ' I know my rocks, I've got degrees to prove it.' I says, 'I don't give a shit what you got to prove what you are. Your own damn rocks that you bring me, tell me what you are.' 'Well, what do <u>you</u> think it is?' I says, 'A piece of barium and ricolite.' 'What? Never heard of it!' 'You're a geologist; you better look it up kid.' And he says, 'You're gonna have to do better than that Pancho Villa,' That's what he used to call me Pancho Villa…and I says, 'well, let me go down to my lab and I'll bring the stuff that's gonna prove it to you.' "

As every geologist knows, the use of diluted hydrochloric acid is used for testing carbonate minerals and rocks.

"That son-of-a-bitch (rock) foamed like an ice cream soda!"

"You know what he did? Honest to God…he took that big ass chunk of rock and threw it right through (a closed glass) window!"

(Dan says) Son-of-a-bitch….so who the hell you think you are now? God's gift to rocks?' I says, 'You better believe it!' Oh, we used to have some good arguments."

Robert and his boss – Lance Rom (holding eagle knife Bob made.)

Bob recalled one other episode he couldn't resist telling repeatedly. He was talking about a female co-worker taking notes, while Bob and another 'arcee' were processing a small test site.

"She's not authorized to make any kind of report. She's putting them dots on a piece of paper (a graph). She's just a recorder, that's all she is; she's not qualified to do anything else. (But) she got beautiful penmanship. She can write REAL SMALL, and its (readable)….."

As the men continued their dig,

"She laid out a foo foo, and it resonated in the bucket she (sat) on! You'd swear to God she's beating on a drum! We all laughed….it was embarrassing."

Bob singlehandedly had a few Forest Service personnel fired from their jobs. Due to their ignorance of the laws that governed their department, or pocketing an artifact from a protected site.

"We nailed two other districts because they didn't have no archeologist. Everybody was pickin up manos and arrowheads; bringing them over to me…I had to read the law to them; The Antiquities Act of 1906, is the primary one you go to. Any artifact over 50 years of age is classified as, uh, a non-touchable…. you don't touch it. It doesn't make sense (for them) to tell where they got it, because they've already screwed it up by taking it out of context. So, I said just leave them there in the office, and I'll have one of the guys from the state come over, pick um up, (mark) um …. as 'dead evidence'."

"Archeology is the other hand of geology. They play a vital role in telling you about the social structure of pre-historic people. That's the only way you're gonna have true history; not this crap you read now a days."

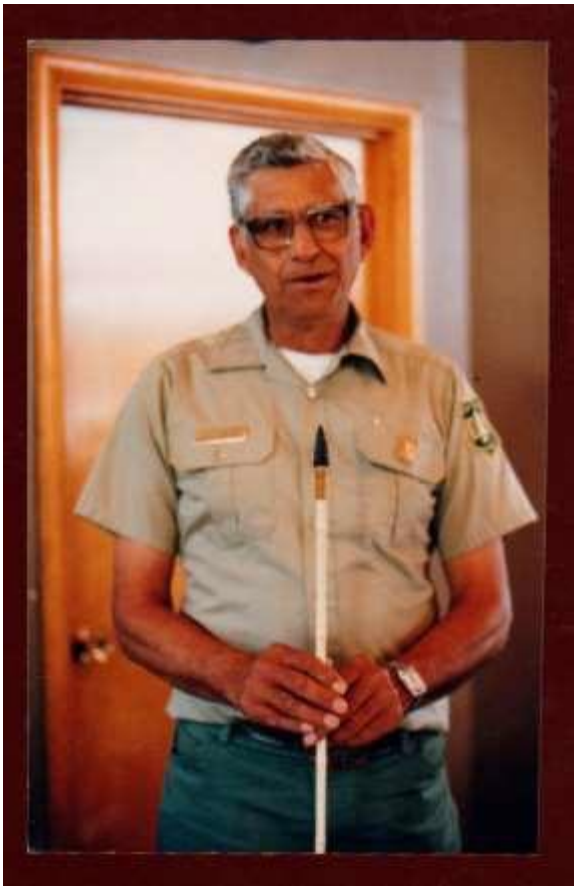
Robert processing a test dig site.

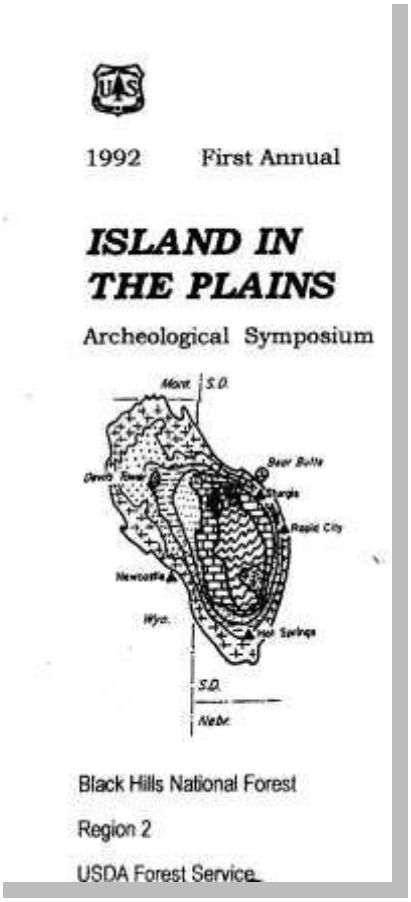
During Bob's tenure he was instrumental in the preservation, interpretation and utilization of the Craven Canyon Petroglyph Site. In Nov 1990, Congress passed the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act. The following April, parts of Craven Canyon were petitioned to be designated as eligible for the Unique Lands Act.

His work enabled him to become a liaison with the Lakota and Lower Brule Sioux of the Pine Ridge Reservation. He was invited in April 1992, to demonstrate his arrow making skills during the "Gathering of Eagles" - the 4th Spiritual Unity of the Tribes.

December 1992 saw the first annual Black Hills Archeology Symposium, "Island in the Plains." The sacred Black Hills are 'an intrusive landform and environment isolated from other similar features,' rising like an atoll some 4,000 feet above most of the surrounding plains. It encompasses a pre-historic microcosm of plants and animals and provided a lithic (stone) source for tools: all necessary to support a thriving human population.

Bob presented a paper entitled, "New Perspectives in Flint Knapping." His first-hand knowledge was essential in keeping with the prehistoric relevance of the Black Hills. Personal presentations from local Oglala Lakota activist, Charlotte Black Elk and Northern Cheyenne elder, William Tall Bull; helped round out the otherwise articulate and data driven papers.





Bob prided himself in demonstrating his arrow-making skills to public groups of all kinds. He was asked to address church groups, children's classrooms, rock and mineral shows, summer camps as well as his regular presentation at the Pactola Visitor Center. He was featured in newspaper articles and even a local news broadcast, where one of the tourists described Mr. Vallejos as a 'National Treasure."

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The year 1991 was important in several ways. Bob enjoyed numerous recognitions, while his skills were sought by civilian, federal and native communities. The visitor count increased considerably while Bob did his demonstrations. In addition, Bob succumbed to the adoring attention of an older, petite woman who was a volunteer at the Visitor Center.

Dorothy (Gilley) Scarem Murphy was smitten with the tall, lanky archeologist. She was 6 years older than Bob and they seemed to hit it off well. They decided to tie the knot.

The nearby Lakota clan sent 2 young warriors; in full 'battle cry'; to one of Bob's week-end tourist demonstrations. They were frightfully realistic and intimidating, were it not for the large, beautiful star quilt they carried as a wedding gift for Bob and Gilley.

Just 4 months earlier, the biggest change in Bob's life had occurred. His dad had died.

Franks health did not fare well in South Dakota winters. He was not staying with his daughter Patty and her family, so he went back to Trinidad. His older granddaughters were able to find a nursing home to take him in. Frank was fortunate to have his grandchildren look out for his well-being.

The brutal South Dakota winters were hard on Bob's health too. Little field work could be done once the snow began. Bob had an agreement with the district office, where he could work on reports; over the winter months at the new property, he and Gilley purchased in Quartzsite, AZ.

The Black Hills were just what Bob needed in his life. A calm, spirit-laden place, with people that appreciated his contributions. Yet early on, conflicts continued with his children. Some had a hard time adjusting to their adult roles. One interdepartmental communication alludes to this.

"Dec 13, 1989 - from Christina Tovar….I was in the dark as far as your plans to work with me on the Harney (timber sales). At one moment, you were ready to start and the next, another obstacle. I learned not to plan on your coming at all. If you came, O.K. and if you couldn't make it, O.K. too…life goes on…"

"From Robert Vallejo: I agree, you are a very dear friend, but as I stated before…even now they cannot leave matters be. They have to rip my professional life to bits. They didn't come to visit or to work, only to make my life the pits…."

"From Christina Tovar: I have a suggestion: call the cops on them, or have a restraining order put on them. There must be a way of resolving the problem and to put a stop to all this ca-ca. You don't need all this stuff in your life and certainly no one deserves this, least of all you…."

Two of Bob's sons committed theft and destruction of private and government property. Therefore, the US Forest Service was forced to involuntarily terminate Bob's employment.

Damn…. rattlesnakes.